

Public Works Committee of the Town of Amherst

Minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 2007

Tuesday, September 11, 2007 at the 2nd Floor Meeting Room of Town Hall

Present: Rob Crowner, Chair, Michael Cann, Donald George, Charles Moran, Vincent O'Connor; Walter Wolnik, liason from the Public Transportation and Bicycling Committee; staff liaison Guilford Mooring, Superintendent of Public Works; Mary Streeter, Precinct 8 Town Meeting Member, Larkspur Drive, and Barbara Ford, League of Women Voters observer.

Administrative

- a. agenda review - *the Committee agreed to use a revised agenda provided in writing by Mr. O'Connor.*
- b. minutes - *the minutes for August 2007 were approved by 5-0 a vote.*

New Business

Larkspur Drive. To accommodate Ms. Streeter, from Larkspur Drive, the Committee agreed to take up this agenda item first. Mr. O'Connor outlined the proposal for a vegetated roundabout on the portion of Larkspur Drive still owned by Mr. Laverdiere at the boundary of the PRP (Professional Research Park) District and the abutting residential zone. Ms Streeter said that previously Mr. Laverdiere had offered to pay to construct a cul-de-sac at that location should the town agree to dead end Larkspur Drive at the boundary of the PRP District. Mr. Cann said he had observed the use of roundabouts to slow traffic at the boundary between business and residential districts in other communities. Mr. Mooring agreed that Mr. Cann's observations reflected an growing and accepted trend in traffic management.

On a motion by Mr. O'Connor, seconded by Mr. Cann, and amended by Mr. George, the Committee voted 5-0 to recommend the following to the Select Board:

That the Select Board consider attaching to the PRP re-zoning article(s) that may soon come before Town Meeting a requirement that a roundabout be installed at the boundary of the PRP and residential districts on Larkspur Drive. This requirement may be accomplished in various ways that are beyond the charge of the Public Works Committee to comment upon, but the committee believes that a roundabout is a feasible and desirable option to address some of the issues that have stalled past attempts to amend the PRP zone characteristics. Among the potential benefits that the committee considered are speed reduction and a clearer distinction between the residential and PRP districts on Larkspur Drive.

Old Business

- a. *University Drive.* The Committee agreed by consensus that Mr. Mooring should arrange a public hearing on proposed plans for University Drive as the main focus of the Committee's next regular meeting on October, that the hearing should take place at a location on University Drive if possible, that hearing notices be widely distributed to business and residential destinations on University Drive, and that an alternative plan to the one previously outlined to the Committee be developed for the presentation.
- b. *Lincoln Avenue.* There was a brief report and discussion on the traffic calming bumps that have been installed on Lincoln Avenue and their possible effect on bicycle safety.
- c. *High Street.* Mr. O'Connor expressed concern about the impact of allowing parking on the west side of High Street. After a brief discussion, further consideration of this item was put off until the Committee's November 2007 meeting.
- d. *Paving Projects.* Mr. Mooring reviewed and updated the Committee on the status of all FY 2008 paving projects undertaken this summer. Mr. O'Connor expressed concern 1) that the Pray Street paving and sidewalk construction project might narrow Pray Street in a manner that would cause problems for the safety of two-way traffic, 2) that this project had been taken off the approved 2006 paving list by the Select Board and not restored, and 3) that in response to direct questions by two Committee members at the April 2007 Public Works Committee meeting, no mention of this project had been forthcoming from Mr. Mooring.

Mr. O'Connor then moved, seconded by Mr. Crouner, that the sidewalk at the elbow or middle of Pray Street be narrowed to provide for safer vehicular travel. The motion lost on a 2-2 vote, with Mr. Cann abstaining. The members voting "No" felt that the project was too far along to be modified. Mr. Cann said he was not familiar enough with the area or the status of the project.

- e. *New Sidewalks for FY 2009 Capital Budget.* Discussion of timing for submission and advocacy for this item was put off until the November 2007 Committee meeting.
- f. *Sand Hill Road Drainage Work.* Mr. Mooring reported that the drainage work Sand Hill Road had yet to be scheduled.
- g. *Pelham Road and Sidewalk Reconstruction Surveying and Planning.* Mr. Mooring similarly reported that survey and planning work for this project is behind schedule.

New Business - discussion on all these items below was put off until future meetings

- a. Larkspur Drive - see above
- b. Repaving notices for future projects, especially those in commercial areas.
- c. Repaving plans for E. Pleasant/Triangle to N. Pleasant and N. Pleasant/E. Pleasant to Amity
- d. A new downtown street - buy house for sale and connect Smith, Tyler Place, and Churchill
- e. Bicycle lanes:
 1. adjust width standards to reflect nature of curbing

- 2. streets, such as North East, still in need of line painting
- f. Committee review process for Comprehensive Plan components within our jurisdiction.
- g. Repaving recommendation/approval process

Submitted by V. O'Connor